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MOTHERS' EDUCATION COURSE.

NOTES FROM A DIVINITY PAPER.

BY MRS. T. S. COLE.

"Suppose ye that I am come to bring peace on the earth. I tell you nay, but rather division." Explain this. Illustrate it from every-day life as for a boy or girl of twelve.

AT first sight it is altogether startling to find Him whom we rejoice to know as the "Prince of Peace," uttering such words as those before us. How can the Prince of Peace say, with any consistency, that He is not come to bring peace, but division? Is not this a contradiction? It may be apparently, but not in reality. Think of the two phrases of St. Paul's—"Peace to every man *that worketh good*," "Peace at all times, *in all ways*." This makes clear to us that the peace which Christ brings is not to be a "peace at any price." It is not for persistent rebels. And one of the "ways" in which it is to be attained may be, so to speak, by the sword. We have heard enough in our day of a "Majuba Hill settlement," to have our eyes open to the fact that in many cases, before lasting harmony can be established, there must for a time be bitter opposition. John the Baptist speaks of the "winnowing fan" in the hand of Christ. This is just the same idea—separation, division, cleavage. And a study of St. Matthew's Gospel reveals clearly the progress of this separating process during the ministry of Christ on earth. It may still be seen to-day. You remember in "Tom Brown" the discussion as to the use of cribs? How strongly Arthur was convinced of the wrongness of the proceeding, and how absurd his objections seemed to the average school-boys round about him! There was the "winnowing" going on. To follow Christ faithfully, to attempt to regulate our lives by His commands *must* bring us into opposition to the careless, self-pleasing men and women, and boys and girls who never stop a moment to think what Christ would like

them to do. And so anyone who earnestly endeavours to be loyal to Christ will soon discover the meaning of the words we are discussing. That is constantly the way with Christ's words. They can only be understood by those who are striving to obey Him. To such it is clear enough that the Prince of Peace did indeed come to bring division.

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A brief review of the life and success of our Lord, as it might have appeared, on the eve of the Lord's Supper, from a worldly point of view.

For children of 12 or 14 years of age.

I remember once to have read a book whose title I now forget—something like "As He was seen of Men"—which purported to be the letters written by a Jew from Jerusalem to a friend, just after the crucifixion of our Lord. It struck me as a marvellous picture of the wonderment, the half-belief, half-unbelief, the utter bewilderment which would naturally arise in the mind of a devout Jew, as at that moment he thought of the life of Christ. Here was a humble carpenter, from a distant country village, drawing multitudes after him by sheer force of his marvellous personality, and yet in the end put to the most shameful death by the general wish of these multitudes. Let us try to gather up one or two points which would seem likely to arrest the attention of one who was not a follower of Christ, as he ran over the life of our Lord up to the time of the Lord's Supper.

I. Could he fail to notice the contrast between the avowed object of Christ, and His apparent failure? St. Matthew tells us very early in his gospel that Jesus went about preaching the "*gospel of the kingdom*," and all through his teaching, "*the kingdom of heaven*" was a prominent subject. Considering how the Jews were looking and longing for their expected Messiah, how they were confidently awaiting His appearance to free them from the Roman yoke, can we wonder that they inclined to think this man, who was so full of the idea of the "kingdom of God," must have come to lead them into the freedom for which they longed? And yet, how far had this kingdom advanced when Christ called his disciples around him for that farewell meal? Just twelve disciples,

nearly all men of lowly birth, and a handful of men and women besides, were all there appeared to be as the subjects of it.

II. Think of the inadequacy of those left to carry out Christ's schemes. Only twelve in number, nearly all mere ignorant, untrained men.

III. Remember the growing opposition of the scribes and Pharisees—how they lost no opportunity of casting scorn upon this young carpenter who seemed such a wild reformer, such an upsetter of all their established ways of life and modes of thought.

IV. Try to realize how an unbeliever in Christ would be struck by what he might hear of this "kingdom of heaven." Would it not seem to him utter sentimentality and weakness? The Roman empire was based upon principles so utterly different—fancy a Roman first hearing of a kingdom to be inherited by the meek, by the poor in spirit, by those who visited the sick, and clothed the naked, and fed the starving. Would he not be inclined to pity the folly of those who relied on such means of conquest?

It seems to me that the more the non-believing observer reviewed the life of Christ, the more certain he would be that "failure" was the only word to be used regarding it.

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"I believe in the communion of saints."

Notes of a lesson for a boy or girl preparing for Confirmation.

I. Who are "Saints"? The modern use of the word is altogether misleading. It often seems to be used as if it were applicable only to those who set themselves up as being better than their fellows. But notice what sort of teaching you find in St. Paul's letters, which are distinctly addressed to "saints." Evidently his notion of a "saint" was a man struggling yet with sins and habits common to his age and to the society he lived in. One is appalled at the very elementary notions of right and wrong which were apparently held by the members of the first Christian churches. Yet Paul calls them "saints," and writes to them such marvellous expositions of Christian truth, as we find for instance in the letter to the Ephesians. Therefore do not let us think that it

is impossible for us to have any personal interest in the "communion of saints" because we are not good enough. Remember Westcott's comforting, stimulating words: "Consecration, not perfection, is the note of Christianity." A "saint" is one who is wholly given to the Lord, set apart for God to use. He may be very undeveloped, he may be painfully conscious of terrible imperfections in his service. But his inmost heart is set on obeying Christ. He is determined to "follow on that he may know the Lord," however full of faults he feels himself to be at present.

II. What is then the "communion" enjoyed by "saints"?

(a) It is participation in all the benefits of their Saviour's passion. One and all have been exposed to the same terrible danger of losing everything because of sin. One and all have been saved by the blessed life and death of Christ. One and all, day by day, look to His life in them to set them free from the slavery of evil passions and habits. Is it possible that those who share such experiences—experiences moving them to their inmost soul—should not be welded together? Must there not inevitably be "communion"?

(b) Therefore in the next place it is rejoicing with each other, sympathizing with each other, and think what that "each other" means. Think of the Christians all over the world to-day—Chinese, Indian, African, dwellers in the distant islands of the ocean—diverse races, diverse nationalities, diverse in habits of life and thought, diverse dwelling places—yet linked together by trust in a common Saviour, loyalty to a common King. Think not only of Christians to-day in different places, but of those living at different times—the fishermen of Galilee, the martyred followers of Christ in Rome, the monks and nuns of the Middle Ages, the Puritans, the Huguenots, the Vaudois heroes. Surely our hearts must burn within us as we take our stand with such as these. Surely our consecration must be deepened as we reflect upon Christ's noble followers in every age. A shared faith is a strengthened faith. To find another believing what I believe, fortifies me in my belief. We cannot then afford to forget this "communion of saints" if our own Christian life is to be perfected.

(c) And again, let us think not only of these men and women of past ages as in the past, as left behind there in

distant times. "For all Thy servants departed this life in Thy fear and love, we bless and praise Thy holy name." But we go on to say, "With angels and archangels, *and with all the glorious company of heaven*" we join our worship and adoration. Without venturing into regions of speculation, may we not gladden our hearts as we sing the magnificent "Te Deum," by remembering our own beloved dead—by conceiving of their place in the vast chorus of praise in which even we are allowed our humble share? "We are come," says the writer of the Hebrews, "to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, *to the general assembly and church of the first-born and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*" May we not then rejoice in our belief in this glorious communion of saints, saints in all countries, in all ages, saints in this world, and saints already in the next—is there any other communion so universal, so far-reaching, so eternal, so all-embracing?

With thankfulness and gladness well may we each say, "I believe in the communion of saints."

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF GREAT BOOKS.

JOB.

THE poet said "the saddest of all words of tongue or pen are these: 'It might have been.'" And ah! how often do they rise unbidden to our lips! How little serves to strike that tense chord within us!—the smiling of a child whose brightness speaks of all the day-dreams fraught with boundless hope, the silence of an evening when the landscape seems to gently close its eyelids after having watched the glories of the sunset, the falling of the leaves, the passing of the year during the course of which so much was left undone, some half-forgotten melody linked with sweet memory of the past, a grave in which not only all the future, but even the present seem to have been entombed—all these, and many other things, remind us how seldom we "drink life to the lees."

But was the poet right? Are, "*It might have been!*" indeed the saddest words? Surely there are moods so piteous that *sadness* is not the true expression. It was *sadness* made Job curse the day of his birth, and pray for death; but it was *despair* made him exclaim, "If I had called, and He had answered me, yet would I not believe that He had hearkened unto my voice. For He breaketh me *without a cause* . . . Oh! that I might come even to His seat. But I cannot behold Him; *He hideth Himself.* . . ." And throughout the book of Job there is the agony of the question, "Why *is* there injustice in God's dealings? Why *do* the righteous suffer and the wicked flourish?" It is a question every religion must answer, for it perplexes every heart. *We* have the answer; but it is not to find the answer that we read the book of Job; the answer is not there. And yet Job was restored to peace of mind, for "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." How was Job satisfied? We shall see.

But before entering upon my subject, let me say a few words with regard to the object of these notes on "The Educational Value of Great Books." So much has already been said about the ever-living works of men of genius, that